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SOURCE Ta-chung Jih-pao.

STUDIES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION COOPERATIVES  
REVEAL PROGRESS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SHANTUNG PROVINCE

[Summary and Comment: This report summarizes a study of progress made in 1952 in ten experimental agricultural production cooperatives in Lai-yang Special Administrative District, Shantung Province, by a staff writer of the Ta-chung Jih-pao. The report points out improvements made as a result of cooperation combined with efficient division of labor; and reveals increased production, increase in incomes, and improved morale of workers. The elevation of the status of women, due to their participation in labor on the same basis as men, is said to have developed a new type of family relationship.]

As a result of studies of developments during 1952 in 19 agricultural production cooperatives in Lai-yang Special Administrative District, Shantung, ten cooperatives were judged to be very successful and are to be cited as exemplifying the benefits to be derived from joining such a program. By pooling their resources, under unified guidance, a much higher rate of production was attained. For example, in Lin-chia Ts'un, of Chao-yuan Hsien, a typical farmer was unable to plant more than one crop a year simply because of lack of labor and fertilizer. Joining a cooperative solved both his problems; labor became abundant and fellow members supplied the fertilizer he needed. Planting two crops a year increased his production to the point that, whereas he formerly harvested 1,300 catties of one crop from 6 mou of land [one mou equals 1/6 acre] he now gets 3,500 catties of maize in the fall season alone.

Unified use of the land permitted good general irrigation of the land in contrast to the old days of unused wells in some places and a complete lack of water in others. This increased the grain output in Lin-chai Ts'un in 1952 from 300 catties per mou to 900. Also in this ts'un labor efficiency improved under a division-of-labor system which fully developed the specialties and physical abilities of each individual. At the same time, improved agricultural techniques were followed, such as deeper plowing, closer planting (on an average increasing by 2,000 to 3,000 the number of maize plants per mou), protection from insect damage, etc.

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Eight cooperatives developed secondary industries, utilized surplus labor, and increased members' income, thereby improving living standards. This was done with no loss of agricultural production. In Lin-chia Ts'un, the income of cooperative members from secondary industries has reached 40 percent of the entire cooperative's former agricultural income. Each agricultural production cooperative member's income from agriculture and secondary industries, compared to that of an individual farmer or mutual aid team member, is often from 45 to 125 percent higher.

Agricultural production cooperatives permit concentrated and unified use of finances as well as materials. The members of the ten cooperatives deposited a total of 6,200 catties of grain and 41 million yuan in cash, plus jewelry and petty cash, to help accumulate capital to be used for purchasing new and better tools, developing cocoon raising, and increasing sources of fertilizer, water conservation, and other similar projects. In 1952, these cooperatives bought one new gas water pump, 9 bucket pumps, 16 seven- and ten-inch walking plows, 10 sprayers, 2 mowing machines, 2 corn huskers, 4 large rubber-tired carts, 11 mules, 18 donkeys, 24 head of cattle, and 5 horses. The use of these items of agricultural equipment brought about a gradual change in the old farming methods. Cooperatives of I-hsueh-shih Ts'un, An-kuan-t'ing Ts'un, and Ma-t'ai Ts'un enlarged their herds of pigs and flocks of sheep, and the three villages of An-kuan-t'ing, Tung-san-chiao, and Chia-chia-kcu have added 30 mou to their productive acreage since 1951. Two cooperatives had a production increase of 20 to 25 percent, two from 31 to 35 percent, two others from 82 to 90 percent, and two from 110 to 120 percent.

The establishment of cooperatives developed a new type of family relationship by taking women out of their subservient position in the home and placing them side by side with men, doing the same work, and receiving equal pay. Along with the development of cooperation and collectivism has come the realization of the dignity of labor and the idea of relying on one's work for a livelihood rather than upon the produce of the land alone.

In return for the benefits received from joining a cooperative, members responded to the national call for economic reconstruction by voluntarily supplying labor from their own ranks and by paying grain taxes in their highest quality grain.

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